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DEPT FOR DRL/PHD KARA CUMBERLAND

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [KDEM](#) [BO](#)
SUBJECT: HRDF POLLING CONTINUES, NEW DISTRIBUTOR SUCCESSFUL

Classified By: Pol/Econ Chief Dereck Hogan for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) This is the third report on implementation of a DRL grant to provide independent opinion polling in Belarus. Under the auspices of a DRL Human Rights and Democracy Fund (HRDF) small grant (ref A), the IISEPS polling service conducted the fifth of six opinion polls August 15-25 (see septel for polling results). The final survey is scheduled for November. Although his polling has proceeded successfully so far, IISEPS' head Oleg Manayev reported receiving a second written warning from the prosecutor's office for conducting polls. He also fears legislation under consideration by parliament will give the government access to poll respondents' answers, thereby destroying the anonymity upon which scientific independent polling is based.

¶2. (C) As a corollary to the HRDF grant, the Czech government has provided a grant to support distribution of the IISEPS' results. Originally this grant was awarded to the Vyasna human rights NGO. However, Manayev doubted their continued ability to disseminate the results, and the grant was transferred to the Belarusian Party of Communists (BPC). The BPC distributed 100,000 copies of the latest poll results September 11-18. According to Manayev, the BPC has increased the percentage of recipients that confirm having received and read the reports to 75 percent from Vyasna's 67 percent. The BPC expanded the geographic scope of distribution to 26 cities (versus 11 covered by Vyasna). Manayev hopes that the BPC will distribute 200,000 copies of the final poll. Manayev estimates the distribution of 200,000 would mean up to 2 million Belarusian's might hear of the survey results through word of mouth.
Stewart